



FEED MY SHEEP

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“And Enoch ... *was* not; for God took him.”

Last month we examined the case of Elijah the prophet and his sky ride. A study of biblical chronology proved conclusively that Elijah did not go off to heaven, the abode of God, thereby bypassing death. He merely went for a ride in the sky, returned and apparently went into semi-retirement. We will add further proof in this FMS as we deal with the case of Enoch.

We began this excursion into the cases of Elijah and Enoch in an effort to demonstrate that no one achieves absolute, sinless perfection in this life. Instead, our sanctification is a lifelong process in which we aim towards that goal. However, total perfection can only be achieved—indeed is concomitant with—an immortal, incorruptible body, which comes by way of resurrection from the dead. That is to say, the only qualification for resurrection is that one must first die!

Some believe that the Transfiguration of Jesus adds further proof that Elijah went to heaven and never came back to earth until then. The incident is described in the gospel of Matthew.

KJV Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias [Greek form of the Hebrew name, Elijah] talking with him.

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

On the surface, it sounds like a good argument. Our opponents would point out that Moses and Elijah were obviously there with Jesus. But were they really? Did Peter, James and John really see Elijah, the flesh-and-blood bodily person? Or did God/Jesus simply create a vision of Moses and Elijah for the apostles' benefit? The answer is found in the next verse.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

We all have seen visions, even if they are only “night visions” (dreams). But we know that even if we see “people” in our dreams whom we are or were acquainted with in real life, we know that the real physical person was not in our dream; it was only a vision. This begins to lead into the area concerning the state of the dead and we do not wish to get too far afield at this time so we will simply point out that we have dealt very thoroughly with that and related doctrines in previous studies.¹

Job the Perfect One

Speaking of supposedly perfect humans, what about Job?

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

If Elijah and Enoch were perfect and righteous, and therefore supposedly were taken off to be with God in heaven, why didn't righteous Job get whisked off to heaven, too? But Job died just as all other men do. Furthermore, did Job expect that after he died that he (i.e., his soul) would go to heaven and see God? No, not at all! Job knew that when he died, he would be just that: dead. He would not be. He would not exist—until millennia later, at the time of the resurrection from the dead, and then, in an immortal body he would see God.

Job 19: 25 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

26 And *though* after my skin worms destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

Did Job really know what he was talking about here? Would not Job go to heaven when he died? Maybe this was just mistaken thinking on his part? No, again, because God Himself with a double witness verified the truth of Job's declarations in the latter part of the story of Job.

Job 42: 7 And it was *so*, that after YHWH had spoken these words unto Job, YHWH said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

So then, how "perfect" and "righteous" was Job? or Enoch? or Elijah? These terms clearly must be understood as comparative or relative terms. They were godly men compared to others around them, yet

we know that they were not absolutely perfect or righteous because the Scriptures tell us otherwise elsewhere. God says through Paul:

Romans 3: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Is Enoch Immortal?

Let us now examine the case of the patriarch Enoch. It is commonly taught in many churches that Enoch went to heaven bodily without dying and has been there now for millennia. This belief is based upon the following two passages.

Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Question: where does it say in either verse that Enoch went to heaven or even that he went to be in the presence of God? It does not say that. That is called *eisegesis*; reading into a passage something that is not there. If Enoch had been "translated" directly and bodily into heaven without dying, then several contradictions to other Scriptures immediately appear.

(1.) Did God grant Enoch an exemption to the rule: "For as in Adam ALL die,..."? (1 Cor. 15:22)

(2.) Notice the phrase in Gen. 5:24 "he was not." A study of other passages using that or similar phrasing shows that it simply means that the person died. For example, notice what Job said.

Job 7: 21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

In other words, he would be dead in the morning. The same type of language is used by the patriarch Jacob when he thought that his favorite son, Joseph, had been killed by a wild beast. He said in Gen. 42:36: "Joseph is not,..." "...his brother [Joseph] is dead..." (v. 38). Jacob's favorite wife and Joseph's mother, Rachel, is associated with Bethlehem. When Herod slaughtered the babes in Bethlehem, Matthew described it figuratively as Rachel weeping for her

children because they “are not.” (Matt. 2:18) Thus, when it says in Gen. 5:24 that Enoch “was not,” we see that by the context of Scripture, it simply means that he died.

(3.) In the gospel of John, chapter 3, we find Jesus speaking and if Enoch had ascended up into heaven about three millennia before this; then, Jesus is telling a lie here:

John 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Jesus clearly states that no man has gone up into heaven (meaning the abode of God). That in itself is proof positive that neither Enoch, nor Elijah, nor anyone else was in heaven up to that point in time, circa 33 A.D.

(4.) For additional unassailable proof, consider chapter 11 of Hebrews.

- Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel ...**
- 5 By faith Enoch ...**
- 7 By faith Noah, ...**
- 8 By faith Abraham, ...**
- 11 Through faith also Sara ...**

We see that the writer of the book of Hebrews lists great men and women of faith, notably including Enoch, and then the writer goes on to state unequivocally in verse 13 that “These all DIED in faith,.. When Enoch was “translated,” does that mean he ascended bodily to heaven to be with the Lord? Absolutely not! It is now obvious that Enoch died. Furthermore, for those who believe that going to heaven *when you die*¹ is the promised reward for believers, notice that the remainder of verse 13 debunks that idea.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, ...

Why did they not receive the promises? Because they are dead. Because like Job, they are still in the grave, all awaiting the resurrection, and at that time they will receive their heavenly rewards.

“Enoch ... was not; for God took him.” Simply

interpreting by the English word *took*, we know that even in our day, when someone dies, it is often said of the deceased that God “took” him. Looking at the Hebrew behind the word *took* opens another possible interpretation, one which does not imply Enoch going anywhere but into the tomb. The word *took* in Gen. 5:24 is from the Hebrew *laqach* which has a wide variety of meanings. According to Young's Concordance, it is translated 63 times as “receive” or “accept.” Thus, when Enoch died, God “accepted” him. Because of Enoch’s faith, God accepted him as righteous. Speaking of Abraham, Paul said in Romans 4:5 that “...his faith is counted [accepted] for righteousness. Recalling our previous FMS studies on the doctrine of justification,² we know that it is by faith that one is accepted as righteous by God. That is one’s justification and it qualifies the believer for inclusion into the kingdom of heaven at the resurrection.

That Enoch “should not see death” does not mean that he did not die. Of several other possible interpretations, we offer the following: Enoch died relatively young (for that era). God sometimes takes the righteous at a young age, lest they become contaminated by the wicked. Had Enoch become as wicked as many of his contemporaries, he would not have qualified for life in the Kingdom Age. Hence, God took him early so that he should not see (experience) death (i.e., be dead) during the Kingdom Age. Instead, he would be resurrected to life in that age, because by faith he saw the promises afar off (not immediately after he died).

Another possible interpretation that Enoch “should not see death” is this: It could mean that Enoch was taken at the relatively young age of 365 so that he would not see (witness) the death of the millions of ungodly in the Flood. Moreover, for whatever reason, God obviously intended to save eight persons through the Flood, not nine. Therefore, the righteous Enoch had to pass away before the Flood.

Which of these interpretations of “should not see death” is correct, we do not know. But in any event, as in the case of Elijah, it clearly does not mean that Enoch bypassed death and was taken bodily into heaven. Jesus said no man has ascended into heaven! That settles it for Enoch and Elijah. However, let us go on to examine the idea that immediately after the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, that all the “good guys” from Adam until Christ—or at least their “souls,” according to this (false) teaching— were then taken into heaven. There, they are all alive, along with all the blessed saints who have died since Christ, and they all inhabit heaven praising and glorifying God.

We say: nonsense! The Bible teaches no such thing.

If the doctrine that the dead are not really dead were true, then certainly, along with Enoch and Elijah, of all the people in the Old Testament, godly King David would certainly qualify for “going to heaven.” But Acts 2 is definitive on this. In Peter’s Pentecost Day sermon, he stated (and remember, this was after Christ’s death, burial, resurrection and ascension, so that all the good guys in the Old Testament should certainly have been in heaven by that time):

Acts 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

No, David was not “in heaven” with the Lord. He was and still is dead awaiting his resurrection. Peter had stated just previously:

Acts 2:29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

He is...dead! —not alive in heaven or anywhere else. And since that applies to David, then it applies to all the other saints, from both Old and New Testament times. We are sorry to break this news to some of you who have for years imagined that your dear Aunt Millie is smiling at you from “up in heaven.” That she is not is not a bad thing. It is simply the way God chose to do things. Aunt Millie “is not.” She, along with Job, Enoch, Elijah, David, Peter, Paul, etc. will all smile at you when they are resurrected from their graves at the last trump. Until then, God’s plan is for them to “rest,” “sleep” in the dust, unconscious, totally unaware of any thing (Eccl. 9:5).

Someone is sure to be wondering about all the reports of NDE’s and OBE’s (near-death experiences and out-of-body experiences) which appear to contradict what we have just shown. We are familiar with such things and, while we will not digress on that at this time, let it be known that we believe that (a) such things are real, but (b) when properly understood they do not contradict the Scriptures we have just expounded. We still maintain that the truth is that life after death does exist—at the resurrection, and not before. By the way, one little hint is even given by the label “NDE” itself: it is a near-death experience.

Those who, as we ourselves have in the past, believe that one goes right on living after death are in

fact saying that we are already immortal. The soul is immortal, they say. The soul is understood (correctly) to be the person, the *person*-ality, the consciousness, the mind, will and emotions of a human being. This, it is claimed, survives death, because the soul is immortal. Again, nonsense! It is derived from pagan Greek philosophy. The Word says that the soul that sins shall die. (Ezek. 18:4). The apostle Paul wrote that all have sinned. (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, the logical conclusion is: all (persons, souls) die.

The body decomposes. If the soul dies, does anything survive death? Yes, the spirit does. At death it returns to God who gave it. (Eccl. 12:7). But one must recognize that the spirit and soul are two different things (1 Thess. 5:23). The spirit is the life force which energizes the body. It is NOT the conscious personality of mind, will and emotions! Consciousness perishes at death but will be revived at the resurrection.

Given that the soul is the consciousness, those who teach that the soul is immortal are in direct contradiction to the Scriptures, not only from the above discussion, but also because such a belief makes God a bald-faced liar when He inspired Paul to write:

1 Timothy 6:14 ... our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*

16 Who only [alone] hath immortality,...

Once again, remember that this was written years after Jesus had ascended into heaven. Paul states that even then, Jesus is the only person who has immortality. Enoch and Elijah are not alive in heaven, nor are Job, David or Aunt Millie. No one has immortality (save Jesus) until the last trump. Neither Enoch nor Elijah reached the perfect state, perfectly sanctified, while living on earth. Both died as do all men. Both remain in their graves to this day awaiting with all other saints the resurrection into glorious, immortal bodies. Ω

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